

EL CONCILIO
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BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES TOGETHER



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29 October 2018

Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Applications of T-Mobile US, Inc. and Sprint Corporation, WT Docket No. 18-197

Dear Ms. Dortch,

As president and CEO of The Catholic Council for the Spanish Speaking of the Diocese of Stockton (dba El Concilio) would like to make known our strongest support for the merger between T-Mobile and Sprint (WT Docket No. 18-197).

Representing the largest Hispanic-run social services agency in California's Central Valley. I can attest that one issue that consistently plagues the rural areas of the Central Valley is rural broadband infrastructure, which is incredibly important to many of those to whom we provide services.

The merger between T-Mobile and Sprint will substantially improve rural broadband infrastructure by building a 5G network that extends to rural communities. The combination will lead to service improvements, such as more reliable mobile connections with far fewer dropped calls and will make rural businesses more competitive. What is perhaps less understood is the impact this will have on the agricultural sector, which has over the last few years begun to rapidly adopt "smart agriculture" devices, which streamline farm management and improve yields. A 5G network will allow farmers to use more of these time-and money-saving devices to help their businesses.

A high-speed network will also help to improve delivery of healthcare and emergency assistance to rural areas, which are often underserved. A dependable mobile network is crucial for first responders, particularly during seasonal wildfires or other emergencies when time is of the essence. Additionally, telehealth services could help rural seniors by reducing the number of long drives they make for routine healthcare appointments.

These are just a few of the examples that illustrate how important improving rural broadband infrastructure really is to rural communities. As a non-profit committed to the needs of the community, El Concilio strongly supports and urges the FCC to please take these points into consideration when considering the merits of the merger between T-Mobile and Sprint. Should you have any questions, please email me at jrod@elconcilio.org.

Respectfully,

Jose R. Rodriguez
President and CEO



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